TAD BOYLE: Boy, I couldn’t be more proud of our guys. Our defense, the last two games, has just kind of ratcheted up to another level. And knew we were challenged in a different way tonight than we were yesterday with Cal. Oregon State has got three really, really good players. I can’t say enough about Tres Tinkle and the Thompson brothers, because they’re good players.

We knew in the second half they were going to make some sort of a run at us, and they did. We bowed our backs. We never let it get below 6. And I don’t like to use my timeouts, for those of you that know me, but felt like I had to kind of stem the tide. But our guys kept it in that 6-, 8-point range and bowed our backs and broke out at the end.

We got our heels a little bit off, and they turned the pressure up, they started getting into us and heating us up and got on our heels, and we finally started attacking it, which is what you have to do.

So great team victory. I can’t say enough about this guy to my left. He didn’t play yesterday and comes in today and gives us big-time minutes. Tyler was in foul trouble. Evan was in foul trouble. So Alex came in, did a great job guarding Tinkle. And it’s a tough matchup. He did a great job in Boulder. Really proud of him, and really proud of Evan. Keep taking those charges, you’ll start getting them.

Q. Talking about the guy next to you there, they’ve cut it to six, about six minutes left, 5:50-something, and he takes it to the rim and scores his 10th point. Starts an 8-1 run. With all the people on the floor, was that the guy you’re going, okay, that’s the guy that’s going to start the run for us?

TAD BOYLE: When we recruited Alex, it wasn’t because of his size, it wasn’t because of his strength, it wasn’t because of his skill. Although, I thought he’s a good shooter when I first saw him. But we recruited him for one reason, and that’s toughness.

So the play you’re talking about shows great toughness. It shows great mental toughness and physical. It was a physically tough play, because there was contact, and he finished through the contact.

And so I couldn’t be -- again, for a guy that didn’t play yesterday, that’s just who he is. And he’s always ready when this team needs him. His teammates love him. He’s the epitome of toughness.

THE MODERATOR: Alex, is all that true?

ALEXANDER STRATING: Yeah, if Coach Boyle says it, then it is. (Laughter.)

Q. Can you talk about the sequence that Coach just talked about, you had the big lead, they cut it to six? What were you talking about amongst yourselves obviously to kind of hold it off?

EVAN BATTEY: We just talked about being patient on offense. And really keep guarding the same way we did the first half. And that’s about it.

Q. Talk about that start there. It seemed like you were contesting the first eight, nine shots. It felt like defensively you didn’t really give them many looks early and kind of got them off kilter a little bit?

EVAN BATTEY: We wanted to guard them the whole night and really contest every shot. They’re going to make some. They’re good players. And just contest every shot and be there for every shot and box up.

Q. Can you talk about some of the depth that you have on this team? You had five players record double-doubles today, especially when a guy like Tyler Bey, who’s one of your strongest players, has been relatively shut down these first two games?

TAD BOYLE: Yeah, I just told Tyler in the locker room tomorrow is his day. He’s too good of a player to be -- and foul trouble hampered him today. It was a really tough first half for him.

When you have that big lead you don’t want to risk the third foul. Quite frankly, when it was six or eight, I was -- Evan had four, Tyler had four, and we started going offense, defense, and I thought just in case this game...
goes to overtime, we're going to need Tyler and we're going to need Evan both. And it didn't, but that was my thinking.

We've got great depth on this team, and we've got quality depth. Lucas Siewert is really important coming off the bench. Daylen Kouutz has had, for a freshman, two games in a row, really big-time minutes in big-time games. And obviously Alex tonight.

It's not just our five starters. It's an 8-man rotation. It's truly a team. And what's nice about a team, is when it's some guy's night, maybe Tyler is having struggles, Alex steps up for him, and that's what teammates do.

Q. Congratulations on the win. Alex and Evan, how much were you playing for Buff Nation, with all that's going on with the weather, the deadly blizzard in Colorado? How much are you playing for fans? I know so many couldn't make it here today?

EVAN BATTEY: We got a letter from a fireman like a month ago, two months ago, and it really just said like how much we mean to the State of Colorado. We play for them every night. And just really lay our hearts down on the line every night for them.

ALEXANDER STRATING: I think Evan pretty much covered it all. There's a lot of people can't make it out here tonight, that's all right. We understand; it's very dangerous out there. And we're playing for the State of Colorado and for the university, and we just want to represent the state as well as we can.

Q. You mentioned a little bit of a scare they obviously gave you in the second half. Just in the span of 24-hour period, just day and night in terms of energy coming out of the gate. How did you do the turnaround in a short period of time?

TAD BOYLE: We knew yesterday offensively was not who we are, turning it over 23 times. I looked at the stat sheet at halftime. I told these guys. I said, 10 assists and five turnovers at halftime. Totally different than what it was yesterday.

I've got a lot of confidence in these guys. They have confidence in themselves, in each other. And so sometimes -- look, I think the first game of the tournament is -- there's some jitters, I don't care what anybody says. There's a little bit -- I think Oregon State went through that a little bit in the first half, maybe. I don't know what they would say about that. But I know we had some guys feeling that yesterday.

So sometimes the team that plays the first day has an advantage on the team that didn't play the first day. We all want the bye, because we want to only have to win three games instead of four. But there's an advantage for the teams that play that first night that a lot of people don't recognize or realize. And it was an advantage for us, I think, having kind of got our jitters out yesterday. And today our guys were ready to play.

Q. Felt like you guys threw the first punch there, and defensively seemed they weren't getting good looks early on to get the good start?

TAD BOYLE: Our defense has gone to a whole new level. It's interesting, because they normally start Reichle as kind of a fourth guard, and we had our matchups all ready and they did what they did in Boulder, and they started the Hollins kid. So it changed our matchups. And Shane was going to start on Reichle and now he starts on Ethan Thompson. We challenged him. And Shane answered that challenge.

He's gotten so much better defensively. We know how good McKinley is. We know how good Tyler is and that these guys. D'Shawn Schwartz has become a very good defender, as well. That's what we're going to need tomorrow as we head against Washington.

But tonight our defense in the first half went to another level. Second half they started driving us, and we knew that's what they were going to do. They put a lot of pressure on you. They put foul pressure on you. And our guys did the best job they could. But couldn't be more proud. And our program is based on defense and rebounding.

Q. What does it mean for your program to be back in the semifinals, first time in five years? And early thoughts on the Washington matchup?

TAD BOYLE: It's been a while. I thought about it. I didn't talk to these guys about it, because these guys haven't been around. I didn't want to put undue pressure on them. I felt as a coach, we've won in the first round every year we've been here, but we haven't been in the semis in a while.

In order to get to the finals, you have to get to the semis. We did what we had to do. These guys are playing like they don't want to go home. It's cold back in Colorado, so there's a good reason for that. I know the warm weather is coming. We want to extend the stay as long as we can.

Washington obviously is champion of the league over an 18-game schedule, and they're very, very good. They've got a lot of good players. But the teams that have had success against Washington are the teams that have really guarded them well. And we're going to have to do that again tomorrow.

. . . when all is said, we're done.
Obviously we're going to have to handle the zone and take care of the ball. We had 19 turnovers last time we played them in Seattle. Hopefully we can have that turnaround like we had today, taking care of the ball and ratcheting up our defense. And if we do, that we'll give ourselves a chance.
Pac-12 Men's Basketball Tournament
Thursday, March 14 2019

Wayne Tinkle
Tres Tinkle
Stephen Thompson Jr.
Oregon State

Colorado - 73, Oregon State - 58

WAYNE TINKLE: Yeah, that pretty much sums it up, just picked the wrong game of the year to come out, not make shots, not defend with the intensity we needed to early on, and dug a big hole for ourselves. Great effort in the second half to give ourselves a chance, and I think we just ran out of steam.

Q. Tres, can you pinpoint with why you guys came out so slow today?
TRES TINKLE: No. They came out, really made shots, got confident, and we just didn't really do much to try to stop it. Gave them a lot of looks at the hoop. Easy ones. And we didn't have very good spacing moving within, so that makes for a bad combination.

Q. Defensively, you felt like they contested everything? The first eight, nine shots it seemed like they were there and contesting and kind of set the tone early with their defense?
STEPHEN THOMPSON JR.: You have to give them credit. They were playing with a lot of energy, a lot of intensity on the defensive end. And I think we didn't really do a good job of body movement and ball movement early on there, so tough looks to start the game, which really gave them momentum.

Q. At halftime what was the locker room like?
WAYNE TINKLE: Well, obviously early on the guys were a little bit disappointed because of the effort in the first half. But we made some points that we got across that we needed to do on both ends. Both these guys just mentioned our spacing was really poor and our player and ball movement was poor in the first half. We'd have guys going to move and four of the guys would be watching instead of deploying. So we had to take some tough shots.

And then Colorado saw that we were struggling and so when you do that the thing on the other end becomes this big (indicating.) We let them hit some threes, get some shots at the rim, and our guys carried the offensive frustrations to the defensive end, unfortunately.

But they rallied. We told them we just need to come out and fight, play like we have all year. Again, we showed great heart and effort in the second half.

And then there was -- they called their second timeout and we reminded our guys we've battled back, let's stay in character, let's stay in discipline. And then we had a few possessions where I thought we tried to hit gland slams, and they stretched it out to get to the free throw line a bunch. And it was a little too much.

Much better defensive effort the second half. Guys responded out of the locker room, we had better spacing and ball movement in many the second half. It was tough. We had a season low in the first half in 18 points. A game low of only five assists. You can't do that when you get to this time of year.

Q. When you want the bye, and get it, does it seem like Colorado is warmed up, been on the floor, is there a little bit that works against you, too?
WAYNE TINKLE: That's what everybody says. They got their funk out of the way last night, had a rhythm, got used to the gym. We never mentioned that. We never mentioned the funk or the jitters. When you play in the tournament in your first game you've got to come out. There's a lot of intensity and energy that will help get you through that. And I don't think we had that. We didn't -- for whatever reason, even when we went to some guys off the bench, we didn't bring just that energy and electricity that you need to to kind of invigorate the rest of the group. And we did it in the second half. We found some guys that got it going a little bit for a while. But we didn't have enough of it from the start.

Q. Tres, I know it's still kind of fresh, but how would you sum up this season?
TRES TINKLE: Obviously positive. We did a lot of things for the first time in over 30 years. There were a lot of positives. But we look back and we see there's a handful of games that we still could have won, should have won. But we feel like our season is not over yet.
We're looking to get another game. We're going to keep learning, keep continuing to grow, and just try to turn those weaknesses into strengths.

**Q. Where do you guys go from here? Would you expect to have a chance to play another game at home? And once you get past this one, will the guys be excited about that?**

WAYNE TINKLE: We'll see. We'll see what happens after the selection show Sunday and who reaches out, that sort of thing. My take always if it's the right situation these guys have had a remarkable year, and have earned an opportunity, I think, to maybe get a chance in the NIT or something. But we'll take that as it comes down the road.

Right now obviously we've got some young guys that are disappointed. We have to put our arms around them, love them up. And then at the appropriate time we'll move forward.

I do want to give Colorado credit. They were very physical on the perimeter defensively and in the post. They were really -- our guys are going to be beat up. And when they were pressuring us on the perimeter the plan was to try to get them inside and they did a great job of taking away post entries, ducks and seals, and we went to a spread pick and roll, and some other things. But they played their tails off. They're playing very well.

**Q. You started out for today, Tad seemed a little surprised he thought Zach would probably start, what was the reason?**

WAYNE TINKLE: We wanted to have a little more athleticism out there with Bey and big Battey. Al earned it the way he played at Washington State. It was a no-brainer, the entire staff agreed, we thought that would be a good way to match with their athleticism.